

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
BOARD**

**10 June 2020
16 June 2020
22 June 2020**

Report No. 20-051

Special Education Plan 2019-2020

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PURPOSE:

1. To obtain Board approval of the Special Education Plan 2019-2020.

CONTEXT:

2. School boards are required to prepare a special education plan annually. The plan must be approved by the Board and submitted to the Ministry of Education every year by July 31. This year, the Ministry of Education has extended the deadline until the fall due to school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The special education plan is a document which provides detailed information about how the school district carries out its legal responsibilities for the provision of special education programs and services. The special education plan is in many respects, a detailed expression of how the District will implement the Board's special education policy. Recognizing the size and complexity of the plan, there is a regular cycle to manage review of the different sections of the document. Each month, two or more sections of the document are brought to the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for discussion and review. Similar to last year, a comprehensive review of the document has been undertaken with a focus on improving the clarity and ease of use of the plan and aligning it with legislative requirements.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Purpose and Requirements of the Special Education Plan

The purpose of the special education plan is twofold: to inform the public about the manner in which the school board is carrying out its special education responsibilities; and to report to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry policy document *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017* establishes precise requirements for special education plans for all school boards of the standards against which their special education

plan will be measured. The standards reflect what the Ministry of Education considers to be necessary to meet the needs of exceptional students. The special education plan is also a framework in which we communicate to our District staff the expectations and requirements essential to serving our special education learners.

4. Revision Process of the Special Education Plan

The revisions to the 2019-2020 special education plan were drafted in consultation with members of SEAC. The following is a summary of the topics and dates of the items reviewed:

- 11 September 2019, The OCDSB Model for Special Education, and Transportation;
- 9 October 2019, The Identification, Placement and Review Committee, Provincial and Demonstration Schools in Ontario, and Accessibility of School Buildings;
- 13 November 2019, Special Education Staff, Staff Development, and Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities;
- 4 December 2019, The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee, Educational and Other Assessments, Coordination of Service with Other Ministries or Agencies, and Roles and Responsibilities;
- 8 January 2020, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings, and The Board's Consultation Process;
- 12 February 2020, Equipment, Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies; and
- 11 March 2020, Special Education Placements Provided by the OCDSB

Similar to previous years, considerable effort has been made reviewing the language of the special education plan and how to access specific information to best support students and families. A regular part of the annual review process includes various reviews of current data such as expenditures for equipment, professional development opportunities, SEAC membership, and staffing allocations, etc.

Our current practice of reviewing the special education plan in sections with SEAC on a monthly basis works well in that it allows for discussion of the document in manageable pieces, allowing us to make progress over the course of the year. However, given that approval by the Board occurs at the end of the school year, only minor edits can be accommodated at this stage. The final approval stage will likely generate ideas and suggestions which will be carried forward into the review process which starts again in September.

5. Submission Process and Timelines

As required in the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017*, the special education plan must be approved by the school board and any amendments must be forwarded to the local district office of the Ministry of Education. Two copies of the complete plan must be submitted with the following documents:

- A letter from the director of the school board that confirms that the school board's special education plan is being submitted in compliance with the

requirements of *Regulation 306* and with the standards outlined in the *Special Education in Ontario - Kindergarten to Grade 12 - Policy and Resource Guide 2017*;

- A copy of the Board's motion of approval of the plan including the date of approval;
- A copy of any related motions or recommendations from the board's SEAC; and
- A copy of the Special Education Report, which is only required every other year, was not required this year. This report is only required next year with the 2020-2021 special education plan submission to the Ministry of Education.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6. The work undertaken on the special education plan by Learning Support Services (LSS) to review and update the plan has been substantive over the course of this year. Staff estimates approximately 15 days of work have been invested in reviewing and rewriting the plan. In addition, SEAC has allocated time on every agenda for this item.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

7. The key consultation on the plan has occurred through SEAC meetings. The dates and times of the meeting discussions are noted above. The value of discussions at SEAC is that it ensures the committee, and members of the community with a strong interest in special education issues, have the opportunity to discuss ideas and inform the way that services are delivered.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

8. The special education plan outlines several links to the District Strategic Plan with a focus on reducing barriers to learning and providing individualized personalized support and resources to meet the needs of every learner. In addition, the plan supports the development of strategies, tools, and resources to foster strong relationships among students, staff, families, and schools.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Special Education Plan 2019-2020, attached as Appendix A to Report 20-051 be approved.

Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of
Learning Support Services

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

Appendix A – Special Education Plan 2019-2020 (Separate Distribution)